



2013

Agitprop

Part 3

Paint, Posters and Graphic Art



[Paint](#) logo



[“Paint”](#) Logo (from Windows 7)

“Paint”

A programme for managing image files

There are many programmes that help people to do things with image files. The most available one is [“Paint”](#), which comes as part of the Microsoft Windows operating system package. So “Paint” is a good example to use, because most people will already have it, on their computers.

What is an image, or graphics, file? It is an electronic file that stores an image. Using such files, it becomes possible to insert images into your text documents and into your e-mails, in just the same way as the “Paint” logo has been used in this document (see above).

The ability to use images as well as text makes you into a much better communicator. It also opens the door to graphic design for you. Photographs are also stored in image files, so this item applies to photos as well as to graphics such as logos.

File formats

Graphic images are stored by computer programs into files with extensions like .BMP (“Bitmap”), .JPG (“J-peg”), .PNG, .GIF, and .TIF (“Tiff”). Paint will open all these formats, and it can also save a file in a different format to what it was originally. This is a useful thing to be able to do.

The reason is that files have different characteristics. The first consideration is file size. Bitmap files are usually very large. Hence they are usually converted to one of the other formats before use, such as JPEG.

The J-peg, or JPEG, is the most economical format. The file sizes are very small, such that one may be able to insert several J-pegs in one document, before the document becomes too large.

But the quality of the JPEG image is not always good. A good compromise is PNG, which saves colours very well, but is not too large, although usually larger than a JPEG.

Saving an image file is the same as saving any other kind of file. It must have a name, and it goes in a folder, where it can be found again when it is needed.

Cropping and re-sizing

In “Paint”, you can crop an image, and you can re-size it. The largest size you are likely to need for e-mails is 850 pixels across. Cropping and re-sizing can produce a smaller file, which may be a better image, as well. In Paint, to crop all four sides of an image, you will have to “Rotate” it.

Inserting an image into an e-mail

To be able to insert an image into a document or an e-mail, and to be able to control its position there, is a giant step forward in your computing life. In “Word” and in “Outlook” you use the “Insert” tab and then the “Picture” icon. In Thunderbird you use the “Insert” drop-down menu or icon, and select “Image”. In Gmail you click first the “+” sign at the bottom of your e-mail box and then the little camera icon. Follow the procedure to find the file you want to insert, in your hard drive.

Your image will go in where you left your cursor. If you want to centre the image, select it and then click on the centre (text) icon. You will be able to adjust the size of your image.

Getting and creating more images

One way to get images is to use the “PrtSc” (“Print Screen”) key on the keyboard. This causes the contents of the open screen to be held in the “Clipboard”, from where it can be pasted into the screen of “Paint”, and then saved as an image file.

This provides a way of reducing a poster, say, to an image equivalent to an electronic flier that you could paste into an e-mail. The CU relies on this technique, a lot.

Among other things, use of “PrtSc” gives you way to put together a new composite image from existing images. You can use “Table” in Word, and open images in different cells. This allows you to control the whole “ensemble”. You can remove the cell borders. Then you can to a “PrtSC” and paste the composite image in to “Paint”, and save.

Big sources of images are Google Images and Yahoo Images. Don’t use other people’s images if they don’t want you to.

More tools in “Paint”

In “Paint” you can draw freehand, or use the given shapes and lines. You can fill with colour. If you want to extend or reproduce a colour, you can use the “Colour Picker” tool, and then the “Fill” thing.

You can open “Paint” more than once, i.e. you can have different images open and you can select, copy and paste from one window to another.

That’s about it. Paint does not have a lot of tools, but you can do nearly everything you would normally want to do, with this useful little programme that everybody has.



"Women Workers, Take Up Your Rifles!", 1920

Posters

The first thing to say about posters is that simplicity is what makes them good.

Hence the quality and impact of posters has gone down since it became possible to print photographs in polychrome. Posters have come to all look the same, without distinction and without a clear message.

Posters should have a simple, strong image and a few words, printed large so that they can be read from far away.

The above image is a one of the famous Soviet revolutionary posters that were made with paper and only two colours of ink (black and red).



Ocean Waves, Hokusai, 1760-1849

Graphic Art

The staggering image by Hokusai, above, demonstrates that impact is not a function of complexity, but of simplicity.

Hokusai's art, like our Agitprop, was made for mass reproduction. In those days, there was no polychrome printing. Only one or two colours would be available, apart from black ink and white paper. The blocks were hand-carved out of wood, and printed "in register", one colour after another.

A modern equivalent of this kind of serial colour printing is the digital duplicator, also called a CopyPrinter. This machine is a development of the stencil process, now fully automatic and computerised. It rolls the paper flat and cold passed rotating drums from which ink is expressed through the stencil image. Different colour drums can be used to create multi-colour effects, similar to the process used by Hokusai. The [top of the range model](#) can print on both sides of the paper at a rate of up to 240 sheets per minute, although it is a small machine. This is the cheapest, fastest method of printing at the scale required by political organisations, and it allows full control.

In the years after the Great October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia, the only available colour other than black and white was red. Yet the posters produced in the Soviet Union in those days are legendary and they are still studied everywhere.



Have you volunteered for the Red Army?, Dmitry Moor, 1920



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